

Senate Bill No. 117

CHAPTER 582

An act to amend Sections 7500.1 and 7507.3 of the Business and Professions Code, to amend Sections 22202 and 22329 of the Financial Code, and to amend Sections 14602.6, 14607.6, and 23596 of the Vehicle Code, relating to collateral recovery.

[Approved by Governor September 17, 1998. Filed
with Secretary of State September 18, 1998.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 117, Kelley. Collateral recovery.

(1) The Collateral Recovery Act, which governs persons engaged in repossession of collateral, requires licensing of persons or entities engaged in repossession, and certification of persons who are in active control of businesses engaged in repossession. Existing law defines "assignment" for these purposes.

This bill would require an assignment to be in writing, and would provide that a photocopy, facsimile copy, or electronic copy shall have the same force and effect as an original written assignment.

(2) Existing law defines "charges" for the purpose of provisions regulating consumer loans, and provides that actual fees not exceeding \$300 paid in connection with the repossession of a motor vehicle to licensed repossession agencies are not included within the definition of that term.

This bill would instead provide that actual and necessary fees not exceeding \$500 paid in connection with the repossession of a motor vehicle to licensed repossession agencies are not included within the definition of that term.

(3) Existing law governing consumer loans provides to any person liable on a consumer loan secured by a lien on a motor vehicle, the right to reinstate the loan in the event of a default by the borrower, subject to certain conditions and exceptions. Existing law governing the method of this reinstatement requires the borrower or any other person liable on the loan to "cure" events of default that were grounds for repossession of the motor vehicle or that occurred subsequent to repossession, including reimbursing the lender for actual fees paid in connection with the repossession of the motor vehicle to a licensed repossession agency.

This bill would instead require, in this regard, that the borrower or any other person liable on the loan reimburse the lender for actual and necessary fees paid in connection with the repossession of the motor vehicle to a licensed repossession agency.

(4) Existing law provides for the impoundment and sale of motor vehicles by law enforcement agencies under certain circumstances. A legal owner who in the regular course of business conducts sales of repossessed or surrendered motor vehicles may generally take possession and conduct the sale of the vehicle upon notifying the law enforcement agency and distributing the proceeds as required.

This bill would delete the requirement that the legal owner regularly conduct sales of repossessed or surrendered motor vehicles in order to take possession and conduct the sale of the vehicle, and would instead allow any legal owner who is a licensed financial institution legally operating in this state or the agent of that legal owner of a motor vehicle that is subject to be sold by a law enforcement agency under these provisions to take possession and conduct the sale. The bill would provide that the notice to the law enforcement agency may be in person, by certified mail, by facsimile transmission, or by electronic mail.

(5) The bill would also make related and conforming changes.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. Section 7500.1 of the Business and Professions Code is amended to read:

7500.1. The following terms as used in this chapter have the meaning expressed in this section.

(a) “Person” includes any individual, partnership, limited liability company, or corporation.

(b) “Department” means the Department of Consumer Affairs.

(c) “Director” means the Director of Consumer Affairs.

(d) “Bureau” means the Bureau of Security and Investigative Services.

(e) “Chief” means the Chief of the Bureau of Security and Investigative Services.

(f) “Licensee” means an individual, partnership, limited liability company, or corporation licensed under this chapter as a repossession agency.

(g) “Qualified certificate holder” or “qualified manager” is a person who possesses a valid qualification certificate in accordance with the provisions of Article 5 (commencing with Section 7504) and is in active control or management of, and who is a director of, the licensee’s place of business.

(h) “Registrant” means a person registered under this chapter.

(i) “Services” means any duty or labor to be rendered by one person for another.

(j) “Dangerous drugs” means any controlled substances as defined in Chapter 2 (commencing with Section 11053) of Division 10 of the Health and Safety Code.

(k) “Deadly weapon” means and includes any instrument or weapon of the kind commonly known as a blackjack, slungshot, billy, sandclub, sandbag, metal knuckles, dirk, dagger, pistol, or revolver, or any other firearm, any knife having a blade longer than five inches, any razor with an unguarded blade, and any metal pipe or bar used or intended to be used as a club.

(l) “Combustibles” means any substance or article that is capable of undergoing combustion or catching fire, or that is flammable, if retained.

(m) “Health hazard” means any personal effects which if retained would produce an unsanitary or unhealthful condition.

(n) “Advertisement” means any written or printed communication, including a directory listing, except a free telephone directory listing which does not allow space for a license number.

(o) “Assignment” means a written authorization by the legal owner, lienholder, lessor or lessee to skip trace, locate, or repossess or to collect money payment in lieu of repossession of, any collateral, including, but not limited to, collateral registered under the Vehicle Code that is subject to a security agreement that contains a repossession clause. “Assignment” also means a written authorization by an employer to recover any collateral entrusted to an employee or former employee if the possessor is wrongfully in possession of the collateral. A photocopy, facsimile copy, or electronic copy of an assignment shall have the same force and effect as an original written assignment.

(p) “Security agreement” means an obligation, pledge, mortgage, chattel mortgage, lease agreement, deposit, or lien, given by a debtor as security for payment or performance of his or her debt, by furnishing the creditor with a recourse to be used in case of failure in the principal obligation. “Security agreement” also includes a bailment where an employer-employee relationship exists or existed between the bailor and the bailee.

(q) “Legal owner” means a person holding a security interest in any collateral that is subject to a security agreement, a lien against any collateral, or an interest in any collateral that is subject to a lease agreement.

(r) “Private building” means and includes any dwelling, outbuilding, or other enclosed structure.

(s) “Secured area” means and includes any fenced and locked area.

(t) “Violent act” means any act that results in bodily harm or injury to any party involved.

(u) “Collateral” means any vehicle, boat, recreational vehicle, motor home, appliance, or other property that is subject to a security agreement.

(v) “Personal effects” means any property contained within repossessed collateral that is not the property of the legal owner.



(w) “Debtor” means any person obligated under a security agreement.

SEC. 2. Section 7507.3 of the Business and Professions Code is amended to read:

7507.3. A repossession agency shall be required to keep and maintain adequate records of all transactions, including, but not limited to, assignment forms; vehicle report of repossession required by Section 28 of the Vehicle Code; vehicle condition reports, including odometer readings; personal effects inventory; notice of seizure; and records of all transactions pertaining to the sale of collateral that has been repossessed, including, but not limited to, bids solicited and received, cash received, deposits made to the trust account, remittances to the seller, and allocation of any moneys not so remitted to appropriate ledger accounts. Records, including bank statements of the trust account, shall be retained for a period of not less than four years and shall be available for examination by the bureau upon demand. In addition, collateral and personal effects storage areas shall be made accessible for inspection by the bureau upon demand. An assignment form may be an original, a photocopy, a facsimile copy, or a copy stored in an electronic format.

SEC. 3. Section 22202 of the Financial Code is amended to read:

22202. “Charges” do not include any of the following:

(a) Commissions received as a licensed insurance agent or broker in connection with insurance written as provided in Section 22313.

(b) Amounts not in excess of the amounts specified in subdivision (c) of Section 3068 of the Civil Code paid to holders of possessory liens, imposed pursuant to Chapter 6.5 (commencing with Section 3067) of Title 14 of Part 4 of Division 3 of the Civil Code, to release motor vehicles that secure loans subject to this division.

(c) Court costs, excluding attorney’s fees, incurred in a suit and recovered against a debtor who defaults on his or her loan.

(d) Fees paid to a licensee for the privilege of participating in an open-end credit program, which fees are to cover administrative costs and are imposed upon executing the open-end loan agreement and on annual renewal dates or anniversary dates thereafter.

(e) Amounts received by a licensee from a seller, from whom the borrower obtains money, goods, labor, or services on credit, in connection with a transaction under an open-end credit program that are paid or deducted from the loan proceeds paid to the seller at the direction of the borrower and which are an obligation of the seller to the licensee for the privilege of allowing the seller to participate in the licensee’s open-end credit program. Amounts received by a licensee from a seller pursuant to this subdivision may not exceed 6 percent of the loan proceeds paid to the seller at the direction of the borrower.

(f) Actual and necessary fees not exceeding five hundred dollars (\$500) paid in connection with the repossession of a motor vehicle to

repossession agencies licensed pursuant to Chapter 11 (commencing with Section 7500) of Division 3 of the Business and Professions Code provided that the licensee complies with Sections 22328 and 22329, and actual fees paid to a licensee in conformity with Sections 26751 and 41612 of the Government Code in an amount not exceeding the amount specified in those sections of the Government Code.

(g) Moneys paid to, and commissions and benefits received by, a licensee for the sale of goods, services, or insurance, whether or not the sale is in connection with a loan, that the buyer by a separately signed authorization acknowledges is optional, if sale of the goods, services, or insurance has been authorized pursuant to Section 22154.

SEC. 4. Section 22329 of the Financial Code is amended to read:

22329. (a) This section applies to a loan secured in whole or in part by a lien on a motor vehicle as defined by subdivision (k) of Section 2981 of the Civil Code.

(b) In the absence of default in the performance of any of the borrower's obligations under the loan, the licensee may not accelerate the maturity of any part or all of the amount due thereunder or repossess the motor vehicle.

(c) If, after default by the borrower, the licensee repossesses or voluntarily accepts surrender of the motor vehicle, any person liable on the loan shall have a right to reinstate the loan and the licensee shall not accelerate the maturity of any part or all of the loan prior to the expiration of the right to reinstate, unless the licensee reasonably and in good faith determines that:

(1) The borrower or any other person liable on the loan by omission or commission intentionally provided false or misleading information of material importance on his or her credit application.

(2) The borrower or any other person liable on the loan has concealed the motor vehicle or removed it from the state in order to avoid repossession.

(3) The borrower or any other person liable on the loan has committed or threatens to commit acts of destruction, or has failed to take care of the motor vehicle in a reasonable manner, so that the motor vehicle has or may become substantially impaired in value.

(d) Exercise of the right to reinstate the loan shall be limited to once in any 12-month period and twice during the term of the loan.

(e) The provisions of this subdivision shall govern the method by which a loan shall be reinstated with respect to curing events of default that were grounds for repossession or that occurred subsequent to repossession.

(1) Where the default is the result of the borrower's failure to make any payment due under the loan, the borrower or any other person liable on the loan shall make the defaulted payments and pay any applicable delinquency charges.

(2) Where the default is the result of the borrower's failure to keep and maintain the motor vehicle free from all encumbrances and liens

of every kind, the borrower or any person liable on the loan shall either satisfy all the encumbrances and liens or, in the event the licensee satisfies the encumbrances and liens, the borrower or any other person liable on the loan shall reimburse the licensee for all reasonable costs and expenses incurred therefor.

(3) Where the default is the result of the borrower's failure to keep and maintain insurance on the motor vehicle, the borrower or any other person liable on the loan shall either obtain the insurance or, in the event the licensee has obtained the insurance, the borrower or any other person liable on the loan shall reimburse the licensee for premiums paid and all reasonable costs and expenses incurred therefor.

(4) Where the default is the result of the borrower's failure to perform any other obligation under the loan, unless the licensee has made a good faith determination that the default is so substantial as to be incurable, the borrower or any other person liable on the loan shall reimburse the licensee for all reasonable costs and expenses incurred therefor.

(5) Additionally, the borrower or any other person liable on the loan shall reimburse the licensee for actual and necessary fees in an amount not exceeding the amount specified in subdivision (f) of Section 22202 paid in connection with the repossession of a motor vehicle to a repossession agency licensed pursuant to Chapter 11 (commencing with Section 7500) of Division 3 of the Business and Professions Code, and actual fees in conformity with Sections 26751 and 41612 of the Government Code in an amount not exceeding the amount specified in those sections of the Government Code.

(f) If the licensee denies the right to reinstatement under subdivision (c) or paragraph (4) of subdivision (e), the licensee shall have the burden of proof that the denial was justified in that it was reasonable and made in good faith. If the licensee fails to sustain the burden of proof, the licensee shall not be entitled to a deficiency.

SEC. 5. Section 14602.6 of the Vehicle Code is amended to read:

14602.6. (a) Whenever a peace officer determines that a person was driving a vehicle while his or her driving privilege was suspended or revoked or without ever having been issued a license, the peace officer may either immediately arrest that person and cause the removal and seizure of that vehicle or, if the vehicle is involved in a traffic collision, cause the removal and seizure of the vehicle, without the necessity of arresting the person in accordance with Chapter 10 (commencing with Section 22650) of Division 11. A vehicle so impounded shall be impounded for 30 days.

The impounding agency, within two working days of impoundment, shall send a notice by certified mail, return receipt requested, to the legal owner of the vehicle, at the address obtained from the department, informing the owner that the vehicle has been impounded. Failure to notify the legal owner within two working

days shall prohibit the impounding agency from charging for more than 15 days' impoundment when the legal owner redeems the impounded vehicle.

(b) The registered and legal owner of a vehicle that is removed and seized under subdivision (a) or their agents shall be provided the opportunity for a storage hearing to determine the validity of, or consider any mitigating circumstances attendant to, the storage, in accordance with Section 22852.

(c) Any period in which a vehicle is subjected to storage under this section shall be included as part of the period of impoundment ordered by the court under subdivision (a) of Section 14602.5.

(d) (1) An impounding agency shall release a vehicle to the registered owner or his or her agent prior to the end of 30 days' impoundment under any of the following circumstances:

(A) When the vehicle is a stolen vehicle.

(B) When the vehicle is subject to bailment and is driven by an unlicensed employee of a business establishment, including a parking service or repair garage.

(C) When the license of the driver was suspended or revoked for an offense other than those included in Article 2 (commencing with Section 13200) of Chapter 2 of Division 6 or Article 3 (commencing with Section 13350) of Chapter 2 of Division 6.

(2) No vehicle shall be released pursuant to this subdivision, except upon presentation of the registered owner's or agent's currently valid driver's license to operate the vehicle and proof of current vehicle registration, or upon order of a court.

(e) The registered owner or his or her agent is responsible for all towing and storage charges related to the impoundment, and any administrative charges authorized under Section 22850.5.

(f) A vehicle removed and seized under subdivision (a) shall be released to the legal owner of the vehicle or the legal owner's agent prior to the end of 30 days' impoundment if all of the following conditions are met:

(1) The legal owner is a motor vehicle dealer, bank, credit union, acceptance corporation, or other licensed financial institution legally operating in this state or is another person, not the registered owner, holding a security interest in the vehicle.

(2) The legal owner or the legal owner's agent pays all towing and storage fees related to the seizure of the vehicle. No lien sale processing fees shall be charged to the legal owner who redeems the vehicle prior to the fifteenth day of impoundment.

(3) The legal owner or the legal owner's agent presents foreclosure documents or an affidavit of repossession for the vehicle. The foreclosure documents or affidavit of repossession may be originals, photocopies, or facsimile copies, or may be transmitted electronically.

(g) (1) A legal owner or the legal owner's agent that obtains release of the vehicle pursuant to subdivision (f) shall not release the vehicle to the registered owner of the vehicle or any agents of the registered owner, unless the registered owner is a rental car agency, until after the termination of the 30-day impoundment period.

(2) The legal owner or the legal owner's agent shall not relinquish the vehicle to the registered owner until the registered owner or that owner's agent presents his or her valid driver's license or valid temporary driver's license to the legal owner or the legal owner's agent. The legal owner or the legal owner's agent shall make every reasonable effort to ensure that the license presented is valid.

(3) Prior to relinquishing the vehicle, the legal owner may require the registered owner to pay all towing and storage charges related to the impoundment and any administrative charges authorized under Section 22850.5 that were incurred by the legal owner in connection with obtaining custody of the vehicle.

(h) (1) A vehicle removed and seized under subdivision (a) shall be released to a rental car agency prior to the end of 30 days' impoundment if the agency is either the legal owner or registered owner of the vehicle and the agency pays all towing and storage fees related to the seizure of the vehicle.

(2) The owner of a rental vehicle that was seized under this section may continue to rent the vehicle upon recovery of the vehicle. However, the rental car agency shall not rent another vehicle to the driver of the vehicle that was seized until 30 days after the date that the vehicle was seized.

(3) The rental car agency may require the person to whom the vehicle was rented to pay all towing and storage charges related to the impoundment and any administrative charges authorized under Section 22850.5 that were incurred by the rental car agency in connection with obtaining custody of the vehicle.

(i) Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, the registered owner and not the legal owner shall remain responsible for any towing and storage charges related to the impoundment, any administrative charges authorized under Section 22850.5, and any parking fines, penalties, and administrative fees incurred by the registered owner.

SEC. 6. Section 14607.6 of the Vehicle Code is amended to read:

14607.6. (a) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, and except as provided in this section, a motor vehicle is subject to forfeiture as a nuisance if it is driven on a highway in this state by a driver with a suspended or revoked license, or by an unlicensed driver, who is a registered owner of the vehicle at the time of impoundment and has a previous misdemeanor conviction for a violation of subdivision (a) of Section 12500 or Section 14601, 14601.1, 14601.2, 14601.3, 14601.4, or 14601.5.

(b) A peace officer shall not stop a vehicle for the sole reason of determining whether the driver is properly licensed.

(c) (1) If a driver is unable to produce a valid driver's license on the demand of a peace officer enforcing the provisions of this code, as required by subdivision (b) of Section 12951, the vehicle shall be impounded regardless of ownership, unless the peace officer is reasonably able, by other means, to verify that the driver is properly licensed. Prior to impounding a vehicle, a peace officer shall attempt to verify the license status of a driver who claims to be properly licensed but is unable to produce the license on demand of the peace officer.

(2) A peace officer shall not impound a vehicle pursuant to this subdivision if the license of the driver expired within the preceding 30 days and the driver would otherwise have been properly licensed.

(3) A peace officer may exercise discretion in a situation where the driver without a valid license is an employee driving a vehicle registered to the employer in the course of employment. A peace officer may also exercise discretion in a situation where the driver without a valid license is the employee of a bona fide business establishment or is a person otherwise controlled by such an establishment and it reasonably appears that an owner of the vehicle, or an agent of the owner, relinquished possession of the vehicle to the business establishment solely for servicing or parking of the vehicle or other reasonably similar situations, and where the vehicle was not to be driven except as directly necessary to accomplish that business purpose. In this event, if the vehicle can be returned to or be retrieved by the business establishment or registered owner, the peace officer may release and not impound the vehicle.

(4) A registered or legal owner of record at the time of impoundment may request a hearing to determine the validity of the impoundment pursuant to subdivision (n).

(5) If the driver of a vehicle impounded pursuant to this subdivision was not a registered owner of the vehicle at the time of impoundment, or if the driver of the vehicle was a registered owner of the vehicle at the time of impoundment but the driver does not have a previous conviction for a violation of subdivision (a) of Section 12500 or Section 14601, 14601.1, 14601.2, 14601.3, 14601.4, or 14601.5, the vehicle shall be released pursuant to this code and is not subject to forfeiture.

(d) (1) This subdivision applies only if the driver of the vehicle is a registered owner of the vehicle at the time of impoundment. Except as provided in paragraph (5) of subdivision (c), if the driver of a vehicle impounded pursuant to subdivision (c) was a registered owner of the vehicle at the time of impoundment, the impounding agency shall authorize release of the vehicle if, within three days of impoundment, the driver of the vehicle at the time of impoundment presents his or her valid driver's license, including a valid temporary

California driver's license or permit, to the impounding agency. The vehicle shall then be released to a registered owner of record at the time of impoundment, or an agent of that owner authorized in writing, upon payment of towing and storage charges related to the impoundment, and any administrative charges authorized by Section 22850.5, providing that the person claiming the vehicle is properly licensed and the vehicle is properly registered. A vehicle impounded pursuant to the circumstances described in paragraph (3) of subdivision (c) shall be released to a registered owner whether or not the driver of the vehicle at the time of impoundment presents a valid driver's license.

(2) If there is a community property interest in the vehicle impounded pursuant to subdivision (c), owned at the time of impoundment by a person other than the driver, and the vehicle is the only vehicle available to the driver's immediate family that may be operated with a class C driver's license, the vehicle shall be released to a registered owner or to the community property interest owner upon compliance with all of the following requirements:

(A) The registered owner or the community property interest owner requests release of the vehicle and the owner of the community property interest submits proof of that interest.

(B) The registered owner or the community property interest owner submits proof that he or she, or an authorized driver, is properly licensed and that the impounded vehicle is properly registered pursuant to this code.

(C) All towing and storage charges related to the impoundment and any administrative charges authorized pursuant to Section 22850.5 are paid.

(D) The registered owner or the community property interest owner signs a stipulated vehicle release agreement, as described in paragraph (3), in consideration for the nonforfeiture of the vehicle. This requirement applies only if the driver requests release of the vehicle.

(3) A stipulated vehicle release agreement shall provide for the consent of the signator to the automatic future forfeiture and transfer of title to the state of any vehicle registered to that person, if the vehicle is driven by a driver with a suspended or revoked license, or by an unlicensed driver. The agreement shall be in effect for only as long as it is noted on a driving record maintained by the department pursuant to Section 1806.1.

(4) The stipulated vehicle release agreement described in paragraph (3) shall be reported by the impounding agency to the department not later than 10 days after the day the agreement is signed.

(5) No vehicle shall be released pursuant to paragraph (2) if the driving record of a registered owner indicates that a prior stipulated vehicle release agreement was signed by that person.



(e) (1) The impounding agency, in the case of a vehicle that has not been redeemed pursuant to subdivision (d), or that has not been otherwise released, shall promptly ascertain from the department the names and addresses of all legal and registered owners of the vehicle.

(2) The impounding agency, within two days of impoundment, shall send a notice by certified mail, return receipt requested, to all legal and registered owners of the vehicle, at the addresses obtained from the department, informing them that the vehicle is subject to forfeiture and will be sold or otherwise disposed of pursuant to this section. The notice shall also include instructions for filing a claim with the district attorney, and the time limits for filing a claim. The notice shall also inform any legal owner of its right to conduct the sale pursuant to subdivision (g). If a registered owner was personally served at the time of impoundment with a notice containing all the information required to be provided by this paragraph, no further notice is required to be sent to a registered owner. However, a notice shall still be sent to the legal owners of the vehicle, if any. If notice was not sent to the legal owner within two working days, the impounding agency shall not charge the legal owner for more than 15 days' impoundment when the legal owner redeems the impounded vehicle.

(3) No processing charges shall be imposed on a legal owner who redeems an impounded vehicle within 15 days of the impoundment of that vehicle. If no claims are filed and served within 15 days after the mailing of the notice in paragraph (2), or if no claims are filed and served within five days of personal service of the notice specified in paragraph (2), when no other mailed notice is required pursuant to paragraph (2), the district attorney shall prepare a written declaration of forfeiture of the vehicle to the state. A written declaration of forfeiture signed by the district attorney under this subdivision shall be deemed to provide good and sufficient title to the forfeited vehicle. A copy of the declaration shall be provided on request to any person informed of the pending forfeiture pursuant to paragraph (2). A claim that is filed and is later withdrawn by the claimant shall be deemed not to have been filed.

(4) If a claim is timely filed and served, then the district attorney shall file a petition of forfeiture with the appropriate justice, juvenile, or municipal court within 10 days of the receipt of the claim. The district attorney shall establish an expedited hearing date in accordance with instructions from the court, and the court shall hear the matter without delay. The court filing fee, not to exceed fifty dollars (\$50), shall be paid by the claimant, but shall be reimbursed by the impounding agency if the claimant prevails. To the extent practicable, the civil and criminal cases shall be heard at the same time in an expedited, consolidated proceeding.

(5) The burden of proof in the civil case shall be on the prosecuting agency, by a preponderance of the evidence. All questions that may arise shall be decided and all other proceedings shall be conducted as in an ordinary civil action. A judgment of forfeiture does not require as a condition precedent the conviction of a defendant of an offense which made the vehicle subject to forfeiture. The filing of a claim within the time limits specified in paragraph (3) is considered a jurisdictional prerequisite for the availing of the action authorized by that paragraph.

(6) All right, title, and interest in the vehicle shall vest in the state upon commission of the act giving rise to the forfeiture.

(f) Any vehicle impounded that is not redeemed pursuant to subdivision (d) and is subsequently forfeited pursuant to this section shall be sold once an order of forfeiture is issued by the district attorney of the county of the impounding agency or a court, as the case may be, pursuant to subdivision (e).

(g) Any legal owner who is a motor vehicle dealer, bank, credit union, acceptance corporation, or other licensed financial institution legally operating in this state, or the agent of that legal owner, may take possession and conduct the sale of the forfeited vehicle if the legal owner or agent notifies the agency impounding the vehicle of its intent to conduct the sale within 15 days of the mailing of the notice pursuant to subdivision (e). Sale of the vehicle after forfeiture pursuant to this subdivision may be conducted at the time, in the manner, and on the notice usually given for the sale of repossessed or surrendered vehicles. The proceeds of any sale conducted by or on behalf of the legal owner shall be disposed of as provided in subdivision (i). A notice pursuant to this subdivision may be presented in person, by certified mail, by facsimile transmission, or by electronic mail.

(h) If the legal owner or agent of the legal owner does not notify the agency impounding the vehicle of its intent to conduct the sale as provided in subdivision (g), the agency shall offer the forfeited vehicle for sale at public auction within 60 days of receiving title to the vehicle. Low value vehicles shall be disposed of pursuant to subdivision (k).

(i) The proceeds of a sale of a forfeited vehicle shall be disposed of in the following priority:

(1) To satisfy the towing and storage costs following impoundment, the costs of providing notice pursuant to subdivision (e), the costs of sale, and the unfunded costs of judicial proceedings, if any.

(2) To the legal owner in an amount to satisfy the indebtedness owed to the legal owner remaining as of the date of sale, including accrued interest or finance charges and delinquency charges, providing that the principal indebtedness was incurred prior to the date of impoundment.

(3) To the holder of any subordinate lien or encumbrance on the vehicle, other than a registered or legal owner, to satisfy any indebtedness so secured if written notification of demand is received before distribution of the proceeds is completed. The holder of a subordinate lien or encumbrance, if requested, shall furnish reasonable proof of its interest and, unless it does so upon request, is not entitled to distribution pursuant to this paragraph.

(4) To any other person, other than a registered or legal owner, who can reasonably establish an interest in the vehicle, including a community property interest, to the extent of his or her provable interest, if written notification is received before distribution of the proceeds is completed.

(5) Of the remaining proceeds, funds shall be made available to pay any local agency and court costs, that are reasonably related to the implementation of this section, that remain unsatisfied.

(6) Of the remaining proceeds, half shall be transferred to the Controller for deposit in the Vehicle Inspection and Repair Fund for the high-polluter repair assistance and removal program created by Article 9 (commencing with Section 44090) of Chapter 5 of Part 5 of Division 26 of the Health and Safety Code, and half shall be transferred to the general fund of the city or county of the impounding agency, or the city or county where the impoundment occurred. A portion of the local funds may be used to establish a reward fund for persons coming forward with information leading to the arrest and conviction of hit and run drivers and to publicize the availability of the reward fund.

(j) The person conducting the sale shall disburse the proceeds of the sale as provided in subdivision (i) and shall provide a written accounting regarding the disposition to the impounding agency and, on request, to any person entitled to or claiming a share of the proceeds, within 15 days after the sale is conducted.

(k) If the vehicle to be sold pursuant to this section is not of the type that can readily be sold to the public generally, the vehicle shall be conveyed to a licensed dismantler or donated to an eleemosynary institution. License plates shall be removed from any vehicle conveyed to a dismantler pursuant to this subdivision.

(l) No vehicle shall be sold pursuant to this section if the impounding agency determines the vehicle to have been stolen. In this event, the vehicle may be claimed by the registered owner at any time after impoundment, providing the vehicle registration is current and the registered owner has no outstanding traffic violations or parking penalties on his or her driving record or on the registration record of any vehicle registered to the person. If the identity of the legal and registered owners of the vehicle cannot be reasonably ascertained, the vehicle may be sold.

(m) Any owner of a vehicle who suffers any loss due to the impoundment or forfeiture of any vehicle pursuant to this section

may recover the amount of the loss from the unlicensed, suspended, or revoked driver. If possession of a vehicle has been tendered to a business establishment in good faith, and an unlicensed driver employed or otherwise directed by the business establishment is the cause of the impoundment of the vehicle, a registered owner of the impounded vehicle may recover damages for the loss of use of the vehicle from the business establishment.

(n) (1) The impounding agency, if requested to do so not later than 10 days after the date the vehicle was impounded, shall provide the opportunity for a poststorage hearing to determine the validity of the storage to the persons who were the registered and legal owners of the vehicle at the time of impoundment, except that the hearing shall be requested within three days after the date the vehicle was impounded if personal service was provided to a registered owner pursuant to paragraph (2) of subdivision (e) and no mailed notice is required.

(2) The poststorage hearing shall be conducted not later than two days after the date it was requested. The impounding agency may authorize its own officer or employee to conduct the hearing if the hearing officer is not the same person who directed the storage of the vehicle. Failure of either the registered or legal owner to request a hearing as provided in paragraph (1) or to attend a scheduled hearing shall satisfy the poststorage hearing requirement.

(3) The agency employing the person who directed the storage is responsible for the costs incurred for towing and storage if it is determined that the driver at the time of impoundment had a valid driver's license.

(o) As used in this section, "days" means workdays not including weekends and holidays.

(p) Charges for towing and storage for any vehicle impounded pursuant to this section shall not exceed the normal towing and storage rates for other vehicle towing and storage conducted by the impounding agency in the normal course of business.

(q) The Judicial Council and the Department of Justice may prescribe standard forms and procedures for implementation of this section to be used by all jurisdictions throughout the state.

(r) The impounding agency may act as the agent of the state in carrying out this section.

(s) No vehicle shall be impounded pursuant to this section if the driver has a valid license but the license is for a class of vehicle other than the vehicle operated by the driver.

(t) This section does not apply to vehicles subject to Sections 14608 and 14609, if there has been compliance with the procedures in those sections.

(u) As used in this section, "district attorney" includes a city attorney charged with the duty of prosecuting misdemeanor offenses.

(v) The agent of a legal owner acting pursuant to subdivision (g) shall be licensed, or exempt from licensure, pursuant to Chapter 11 (commencing with Section 7500) of Division 3 of the Business and Professions Code.

SEC. 7. Section 23596 of the Vehicle Code, as added by Section 84 of Chapter 118 of the Statutes of 1998, is amended to read:

23596. (a) (1) Upon its own motion or upon motion of the prosecutor in a criminal action for a violation of any of the following offenses, the court with jurisdiction over the offense, notwithstanding Section 86 of the Code of Civil Procedure and any other provision of law otherwise prescribing the jurisdiction of the court based upon the value of the property involved, may declare the motor vehicle driven by the defendant to be a nuisance if the defendant is the registered owner of the vehicle:

(A) A violation of Section 191.5 of, or paragraph (3) of subdivision (c) of Section 192 of, the Penal Code.

(B) A violation of Section 23152 which occurred within seven years of two or more separate offenses of Section 191.5 of, or paragraph (3) of subdivision (c) of Section 192 of, the Penal Code, or Section 23152 or 23153, or any combination thereof, which resulted in convictions.

(C) A violation of Section 23153 which occurred within seven years of one or more separate offenses of Section 191.5 of, or paragraph (3) of subdivision (c) of Section 192 of, the Penal Code, or Section 23152 or 23153, which resulted in convictions.

(2) The court or the prosecutor shall give notice of the motion to the defendant, and the court shall hold a hearing before a motor vehicle may be declared a nuisance under this section.

(b) Except as provided in subdivision (g), upon the conviction of the defendant and at the time of pronouncement of sentence, the court with jurisdiction over the offense shall order any vehicle declared to be a nuisance pursuant to subdivision (a) to be sold. Any vehicle ordered to be sold pursuant to this subdivision shall be surrendered to the sheriff of the county or the chief of police of the city in which the violation occurred. The officer to whom the vehicle is surrendered shall promptly ascertain from the department the names and addresses of all legal and registered owners of the vehicle and, within five days of receiving that information, shall send by certified mail a notice to all legal and registered owners of the vehicle other than the defendant, at the addresses obtained from the department, informing them that the vehicle has been declared a nuisance and will be sold or otherwise disposed of pursuant to this section and of the approximate date and location of the sale or other disposition. The notice shall also inform any legal owner of its right to conduct the sale pursuant to subdivision (c).

(c) Any legal owner who is a motor vehicle dealer, bank, credit union, acceptance corporation, or other licensed finance institution

legally operating in this state, or the agent of that legal owner, may take possession and conduct the sale of the vehicle declared to be a nuisance if it notifies the officer to whom the vehicle is surrendered of its intent to conduct the sale within 15 days of the mailing of the notice pursuant to subdivision (b). Sale of the vehicle pursuant to this subdivision may be conducted at the time, in the manner, and on the notice usually given for the sale of repossessed or surrendered vehicles. The proceeds of any sale conducted by the legal owner shall be disposed of as provided in subdivision (e). A notice pursuant to this subdivision may be presented in person, by certified mail, by facsimile transmission, or by electronic mail. The agent of a legal owner acting pursuant to this subdivision shall be licensed, or exempt from licensure, pursuant to Chapter 11 (commencing with Section 7500) of Division 3 of the Business and Professions Code.

(d) If the legal owner or the agent of the legal owner does not notify the officer to whom the vehicle is surrendered of its intent to conduct the sale as provided in subdivision (c), the officer shall offer the vehicle for sale at public auction within 60 days of receiving the vehicle. At least 10 days but not more than 20 days prior to the sale, not counting the day of the sale, the officer shall give notice of the sale by advertising once in a newspaper of general circulation published in the city or county, as the case may be, in which the vehicle is located, which notice shall contain a description of the make, year, model, identification number, and license number of the vehicle and the date, time, and location of the sale. For motorcycles, the engine number shall also be included. If there is no newspaper of general circulation published in the county, notice shall be given by posting a notice of sale containing the information required by this subdivision in three of the most public places in the city or county in which the vehicle is located, and at the place where the vehicle is to be sold, for 10 consecutive days prior to and including the day of the sale.

(e) The proceeds of a sale conducted pursuant to this section shall be disposed of in the following priority:

(1) To satisfy the costs of the sale, including costs incurred with respect to the taking and keeping of the vehicle pending sale.

(2) To the legal owner in an amount to satisfy the indebtedness owed to the legal owner remaining as of the date of the sale, including accrued interest or finance charges and delinquency charges.

(3) To the holder of any subordinate lien or encumbrance on the vehicle to satisfy any indebtedness so secured if written notification of demand is received before distribution of the proceeds is completed. The holder of a subordinate lien or encumbrance, if requested, shall reasonably furnish reasonable proof of its interest and, unless it does so on request, is not entitled to distribution pursuant to this paragraph.



(4) To any other person who can establish an interest in the vehicle, including a community property interest, to the extent of his or her provable interest.

(5) If the vehicle was forfeited as a result of a felony violation of Section 191.5 of the Penal Code, or of Section 23153 that resulted in serious bodily injury to any person other than the defendant, the balance, if any, to the city or county in which the violation occurred, to be deposited in its general fund.

(6) Except as provided in paragraph (5), the balance, if any, to the city or county in which the violation occurred, to be expended for community-based adolescent substance abuse treatment services.

The person conducting the sale shall disburse the proceeds of the sale as provided in this subdivision, and provide a written accounting regarding the disposition to all persons entitled to or claiming a share of the proceeds, within 15 days after the sale is conducted.

(f) If the vehicle to be sold under this section is not of the type that can readily be sold to the public generally, the vehicle shall be destroyed or donated to an eleemosynary institution.

(g) No vehicle shall be sold pursuant to this section in either of the following circumstances:

(1) The vehicle is stolen, unless the identity of the legal and registered owners of the vehicle cannot be reasonably ascertained.

(2) The vehicle is owned by another, or there is a community property interest in the vehicle owned by a person other than the defendant and the vehicle is the only vehicle available to the defendant's immediate family that may be operated on the highway with a class 3 or class 4 driver's license.

(h) The Legislature finds and declares it to be the public policy of this state that no policy of insurance shall afford benefits that would alleviate the financial detriment suffered by any person as a direct or indirect result of a confiscation of a vehicle pursuant to this section.

